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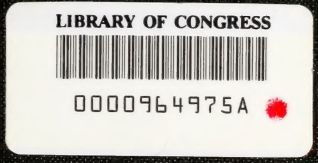

A Memorial

TO A DEVOTED WIFE

VIOLETTA CLARK BAKER

BY HER HUSBAND

HENRY E. BAKER

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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GIFT
AUTHOR

A MEMORIAL TO A DEVOTED WIFE

BY HER HUSBAND

VIOLETTA CLARK BAKER was born in Windsor, Canada, and moved to Oberlin, Ohio, with her father's family, when she was scarcely five years old. In her childhood, she was delicate and frail, but always energetic, industrious and ambitious. From the first of her school days, she exhibited a remarkable desire to learn, and was always eager to excel. These same characteristics followed through her whole school life.

Family misfortunes forced her to abandon, for a time, the orderly course of her studies, and she went forth to Oberlin, Ohio, and then to Detroit, Mich., to the home of an aunt, where she pursued her studies in the public schools of that city. After that she began her own career as a teacher in the schools of Kentucky. In that State she distinguished herself for thoroughness, efficiency and initiative and became a teacher in the High School of the city of Lexington.

It was from this position that she came to Washington to accept a place in the Departmental Civil Service secured through competitive examination. She held this position until her marriage in 1893, to Mr. Henry E. Baker, of

Washington, D. C., when she resigned to take charge of the little home that her husband had built for her on Sixth Street, opposite Howard University.

During her service as clerk in the Department, she had still pursued her ambition to learn; and so began and completed a business course in Stenography and Typewriting in the evening classes of the Spencerian Business College of this city, graduating with honor in the last class to which pupils of her race were admitted.

For a brief while after resigning her clerical position in the Department, Mrs. Baker served as instructor in the Commercial Department of Howard University.

And later, in 1898, she entered the Sauver Institute of Library Economy in Amherst College, Massachusetts, graduating with her class when the course was finished. A few years later she was given a position in the Library of Congress at Washington, where, for more than twenty years, she rose, step by step, holding there at the time of her demise a responsible and confidential position, making in it a record for efficiency, fidelity and initiative which was highly creditable to her, and which has been a source of pride and pleasure to many women of her own particular racial group.

During her stay in the Library of Congress she sought to take advantage of the opportunity at hand for doing some special thing that would redound to the credit of the women of her racial group. And so, in her spare moments, she compiled from the records of the library what is supposed to be the most complete index extant of the literary productions by and about colored women in this country and elsewhere. It was her earnest intention to complete and publish this most valuable collection, showing, as it does, the inner life struggles and aspirations of the women of her race. But this task, too, was left uncompleted by her sudden taking off.

But it was primarily in her home life, as the faithful companion of her husband in all his trials and triumphs, that her really superior qualities shone above the common level. In her loyalty to home and all its interests, in her household affairs, in her constant efforts to make home a place of real love and companionship she was distinctive and untiring.

Unused to, and not in sympathy with that part of social life which gives itself to mere pleasure and frivolity, she nevertheless sought to keep alive the native instinct of sociability, and thus made for herself a desirable place among those whose social activities

turned toward uplift. But to many persons of both sexes and all ages her home was an attractive spot where the wayfarer might be sure of a gracious welcome, a generous hospitality and a cheering word.

Violetta Clark Baker was for more than twenty-five years a charter member of the literary circle known as The Book Lovers, serving always as an active member, sometimes as its secretary and historian, and was its president at the time of her demise, on October 25th, 1923.

Many years of her life were enjoyed as a member of the delightful little coterié of friends living in the immediate neighborhood of Howard University, where in their varied club activities she met them and loved them and was loved by them.

She was a member of the Howard Park Citizens' Association since its organization in 1910, and together with her husband, worked zealously to make this organization effective for good in the civic betterment of the community involved.

As a charter member of the local Correspondents' Club, an association of letter writers, active alike in refuting erroneous and in appreciating commendatory statements appearing in the public press and elsewhere concerning our race group, she drew constantly upon her wide range of reading to aid in this fine work.

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She was a member of the Advisory Board of the Phyllis Wheatley Club of the Colored Y. W. C. A.

By beautiful flowers and by tender expressions of sympathy these organizations bore fine testimony of the high esteem in which they held her memory.

During the last few years of her life Mrs. Baker's health began to fail, and though urgently advised to withdraw from all outside activities, she nevertheless preferred to pursue her work and finally succumbed when the last point of endurance had been reached.

Her frail little bark entered upon the tempestuous sea of life, where she was compelled for most of the time to combat its terrors all alone until she came alongside the sturdier vessel of her life companion. Together they worked heart and hand, until overtaken by the cruel wave which swept her from him, carrying her beneath the surface only to rise again on the Eternal Shore where she will abide forever in the benign presence of the Prince of Peace.

As a wife she was loving and devoted; as a friend she was faithful and true; as a christian, consistent and upright. She leaves to mourn their loss a loving sister, Mrs. Minnie Davis, of Bordentown, New Jersey; two devoted brothers, Cyrus N. Clark, of Vancouver, British

Columbia, and James R. Clark, of Madison, Ohio, and a sad husband.

On the other side of Jordan,
In the sweet fields of Eden,
Where the tree of life is blooming,
  There is rest for you, dear.

Fold her, oh Father, in thine arms,
  And let her henceforth be
A messenger of love between
  Our human hearts and Thee !

HER HUSBAND.

DOBBS BROS.
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